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## Outward appearances also count in business

**Q:** How should business owners present themselves physically when trying to impress potential clients?

Clothes are attributes, and knowing your audience is important. Given the area we live in, I don't necessarily expect an engineer to dress in a suit, but he or she should be in nice slacks and a shirt, and should choose wool gabardine instead of chinos because it's classier. Black is fine for women, but not for men; it gives off the wrong impression. Navy, khaki and gray work much better on men. Grooming is important, too, because clients will look at you from head to toe. How shoes are shined and the quality of the shoes,

coupled with the watch you're wearing, really makes a statement.

If you are an entrepreneur, the way to approach clients in the Bay Area is business casual, like a blue blazer and nice pants or khakis. You want to mirror the person you're going to meet.

As far as how to act when meeting a potential client for the first time, start with a smile and a handshake with eye contact. Remembering names is always a plus. Act happy. Everyone likes to be a winner and likes to be around people who act like they are. Never complain in a meeting.

— Jessica Materna ■